

## Our sacramental, spiritual and pastoral life in St. Brendan's.

Sung Response to the Psalm today, led by Elizabeth: *Please sing this antiphon today at the end of each verse: The love of the Lord, the everlasting love, blesses us all.*

**Hymns for 2020:** *these are carefully chosen each week to reflect the Scriptures and the Liturgical Season. Continuing with the theme of the hymn: Come as you are, we will soon introduce Let us build a house . please read the words at hymn number 319. It is often sung during Mass with the bishop in Motherwell Cathedral.*

**Lent begins this Wednesday.** The Preface for Lent which leads into the Eucharistic Prayer teaches us “*Lord, you have given us your children, this sacred time for the renewing and purifying of our hearts, that, freed from disordered affections, we may so deal with the things of this passing world as to hold rather to the things that eternally endure.*” History helps us to understand our Lenten celebration. The number 40 is significant in the Bible: 40 days of flood [Genesis], 40 days of wandering in the wilderness [Exodus], 40 days of fasting by Jesus in the desert [Gospels of Mark Matthew and Luke], 40 days between the resurrection and Jesus’ Ascension. Since about the middle of the fourth century, the Church has imitated the 40 day fast of Jesus with its own Lenten practice. Before the 40 days of Lent was introduced, the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus was preceded by two days of fasting. Gradually that fast was extended to a week before Easter (Holy Week). It’s believed that a three-week period of intense fasting before Easter Sunday was practiced in Rome (and Jerusalem) before the fourth century.

Where, then did the forty-day Lent come from? A period of forty days of fasting in imitation of the time Jesus spent in the wilderness was observed in Egypt as early as the second century. Gradually, the practice of Easter celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation in the other churches influenced the Egyptians to adapt their forty-day practice to become a pre-Easter celebration.

### **Today there are four exceptional items about and for our children:**

**Two posters are displayed on the sanctuary** which show paintings of the prodigal son receiving a very **Big Hug** from his father when he returns home and is made welcome much to the resentment of his older brother. They may take them to the Hall for their liturgy or prefer to leave them with us for us to meditate upon.

**Lent is a time for prayer:** the children in P1 & P2 will each receive the **Infant My Day by Day** for Lent. Please ensure your child has this to go home with them and bring back next Sunday. The children in P5 – P6 - P7 will each receive the **Junior My Day by Day** to keep and to use. **The Sacramental preparation children in P3 and P4 will receive a booklet for Lent called Celebrate Lent because of their very special spiritual programmes this year.**

**Lent is a time for fasting and almsgiving [charitable works]. Fr. Peter, founder of the charity Let the children live** which works with children who live on the streets of Medellin the second largest city in Colombia, South America visits us this weekend. He will make an appeal for our help in his work to provide food and shelter for the children who live on the streets of this city. For more information please visit the website – [Let the children live.org](http://Let the children live.org). Please be as generous as possible given our own financial circumstances to this appeal.

*The SSVdP will take up their own collection as normal but will donate this to Fr. Peter with the second collection funds.*

**The Second pre-Lent Parish Party:** *last year the parish hosted a party for the children immediately before Lent started. The same entertainer. Cheeko will return today for our second party and I’m sure he’ll be happy to see the children again. Families are welcome to attend and wait on the children and tea/coffee will be served to them as well as healthy drinks and snacks to the children. Angela from the Children’s Liturgy Team and her family will provide face painting. Fancy dress can be worn to church and then straight on to the party in the Hall from 12 noon -2pm.*

**SCIAF Appeal 2020:** the SCIAF Lenten Appeal material focuses on the history of violence against some women in the Republic of Congo, in Central Africa. The WEE BOX BIG CHANGE appeal carries a warning that the topics displayed on the materials may upset readers and may not be suitable for young children. **Please take the pack prepared by SCIAF for their appeal this year, make up the box and fill it over the forty days of Lent.**

## PARISH AND PARISHIONERS.

### **Lent - preparation of the parish community.**

**Joel 2:12-18** The passage from the Old Testament read at Mass on Ash Wednesday

**‘Now, now – it is the Lord who speaks – come back to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning.’ Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn, turn to the Lord your God again, for he is all tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in graciousness, and ready to relent.**

**Who knows if he will not turn again, will not relent, will not leave a blessing as he passes, oblation and libation for the Lord your God?**

**Sound the trumpet in Zion! Order a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly, call the people together, summon the community, Let them say, ‘Spare your people, Lord!’**

Around the world on Ash Wednesday, millions of Catholics and some other Christians head for a church on the same mission. A priest sprinkles a little ash on their foreheads and says the words, ‘Remember you are dust and unto dust you shall return.’

It was the story of Genesis that provided the language of being dust and returning to dust. Adam and Eve had been gifted with all the blessings of creation but were forbidden to eat the fruit of the tree of life that stood in the middle of the garden. The story developed with the serpent mixing truth with untruth when assuring Eve: **‘you will not die. God knows that when you eat this fruit, your eyes will be opened.’**

**After Eve and Adam ate the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened.** But it was an enlightenment which involved their experiencing good and evil. The happy bond between them disintegrated, and so did their relationship with God and the world around them. God told Adam: ‘by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground. For from it you were taken; **you are dust and unto dust you shall return’ (Gen. 3.19).**

**We are not just Ash Wednesday people** – little piles of dust waiting to be blown away on the wind. We are much more than that. Jesus loves each of us and will bring us from death to a life that will never, never end. At the beginning of the journey, on Ash Wednesday, death and mortality have the first word. But it is with final words of light and life that this journey ends at the Easter Vigil and its promise of the feast of eternal light.

### **Our preparations are in place for Lent:**

- **Each Friday at 3.15pm** - after school - we will hold the Stations of the Cross in the chapel. **We hope children and families will come straight from both Schools - Primary and High School.**
- **Each Wednesday beginning on 4<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm in the side chapel** we will meet for one hour to **hear a full explanation of the each of the Lenten Sunday gospels of this year** and to take time for silent reflection with this deeper knowledge
- Young people and adults are invited to make time and to take time to pray. The leaflet with this bulletin gives all the information each person needs to give time over to prayer within this parish to the fullest. If you decide not to do this then take ownership of that decision and look at your relationship in the light of it. If you decide to commit to one or more of the opportunities then try to live out that commitment with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- **During Lent we will appoint two Tuesday evenings to invite all Eucharistic Ministers and then all who serve as Readers of Scripture at Mass, to an individual evening of prayer and reflection on their ministry to the community.** At the end of the Children’s Liturgy programmes for P3 and P4 children engaged in the Sacraments this year, we will invite the leaders to an evening of prayer, reflection, evaluation and peer supervision.

PRAYER INTENTION REQUESTS FROM PARISHIONERS:

**those who have died recently:** Rubina Hogg [Requiem Mass on Monday at 9.30; Mary Finn; Joe Reilly; Gerry O'Donnell [father of Mrs. Colton]

**those whose Anniversary or Month Mind Remembrance occurs about now:** Nita McGinn, Drew McGuire, Jean McAtamney,

**In the Piety Stall:** a selection of spiritual reading materials and cards for Sacraments and Mass Intentions:

**A Word for Lent:** Fr. Denis McBride and Sister Janet Fearn has produced a Lenten workbook which the Diocese recommend for individuals [and parish groups] to follow as a Lenten spiritual exercise. We have 20 Copies [£3.50] for the parish as well as the Redemptorist's **Lenten Extra** resource. We provided Mrs. Oates with a print of Lenten Extra as a resource for every teacher in the school.

**My Day by Day** booklet of Scripture readings has a special booklet for the whole of Lent. There are special booklets in Lent for Infant children of P1 & P2 age. Children who attend the Children's Liturgy. P3 and P4 children will receive the Redemptorist booklet **Celebrate Lent**. P5, P6 and P7 children will receive **the Junior My Day by Day for Lent**. Copies of these three booklets are available for sale at the Stall.

*Don't give up* something for Lent - *take up something* positive such as following the Scripture passages used day by day. These fit together during Lent and finish at Easter.

**The Magnificat** booklet contains the prayers and readings for daily Mass plus the Breviary Prayers and meditations for each day and information on the life of the saint of the day AND

**the Sacred Heart Messenger** written by Jesuits makes this very special and has prayers, reflections on scripture and meditations for Lent on our spiritual life using poetry and art and has a good section for children.

**Our Children:** Safeguarding practices and norms within our Diocese - and other matters.

**Safeguarding:** Kathleen Cosgrove is the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator. Kathleen needs supported in this crucial role so that we fulfill our obligation to our children. Ellen Connelly, Suzane O'Hare and Catherine Anne Bulloch will join Kathleen in conjunction with Fr. Ness in this very important part of our pastoral life.

The policies and practice of our Diocese are to be reviewed this year by the Independent Review Group.

**Bishop Toal has issued the annual Statement on Safeguarding to be read out or given out in every parish today to every parishioner. It will be permanently displayed on our Notice Board.**

**ALMA Group:** Two young women have expressed an interest from our parish. Young people must be at least in S6 to join the Group so that they will have left school by the time of the pilgrimage to Lourdes in July. We will offer financial support to those young people from our parish who would wish to participate.

**St. Patrick's Night Party: Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March [7-11pm].** We thank those who have given of their time and their talents to organise parish evenings like this. The poster with all information is on display and tickets are on sale. Please come and see how we who pray together can meet and enjoy play and recreation time together.

**Talk with photographs and slides on the Holy Land:** will be given by Bishop Nolan on **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March** immediately after morning Mass. Tea and coffee will be served as normal. **There won't be tea and coffee in the Hall after Mass this Wednesday as it's Ash Wednesday - a day of Fast and Abstinence.**

**The Parish website:** is fully operational at [www.st-brendans.com](http://www.st-brendans.com). Please explore all the content there. The parish Twitter account is used with the website to keep everyone interested, up to date with our life.

**Parishioners who are EU citizens:** please take the leaflet issued by the Catholic Parliamentary Office to explain "settled status". The leaflet is available at the entrance to the church.

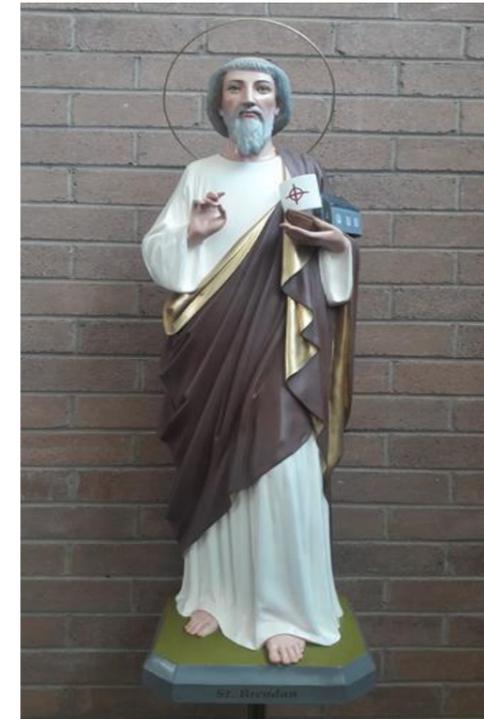
**St. Brendan's the Navigator Parish**

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**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/saintbrenrc](https://www.facebook.com/saintbrenrc)**



**The Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time. Twenty third February '20.**

**Let the Children Live:** Today we will hear an appeal by Fr. Peter Walters who founded this charity to care for children left to live on the streets in Colombia, South America. The second collection will be taken up in our response after Holy Communion.

**The timetable for Lenten Services and the Bishop's Statement on Safeguarding should be taken home and read and retained there.**

**We welcome all the children and their families as they continue their preparation for Lent and in the case of P3 and P4 children - their Sacramental preparation.**

**Mass: Sunday at 10.30am and at 4.30pm. Midweek at 9.30am.  
Holy Hour: every Thursday at 7pm.**